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FROM: BERLIN

Info

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TO: Secretary of State

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NO: 339, NOVEMBER 15, 8 PM

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SENT DEPARTMENT 339, BONN 292 REPEATED INFORMATION MOSCOW 89,
LONDON 25 PARIS 33

BONN PASS PRITY USPOLAD USAREUR 94.

PARIS PASS USRO AND THURSTON.

FROM TRIMBLE.

IT VIEW BRANDT WITH WHICH GEN HAMLETT, BURNS, AND I AGREE
THAT PROCEDURE SOVIETS INTEND TO FOLLOW IN TRANSFERRING
CONTROLS TO GDR WILL BE GRADUAL. THEY WILL SEEK AVOID ANY
STEPS WHICH IN ITSELF MIGHT BE REGARDED AS RUBICON AND THUS
PROVIDE BASIS TO RALLY WEST PUBLIC OPINION IN SUPPORT VIGOROUS
COUNTER MEASURES. RATHER SOVIETS APPARENTLY HOPE BY SLOW
BUT STEADY TURNING OF SCREW TO BRING ABOUT SITUATION IN WHICH
POSITION WEST POWERS BERLIN WILL EVENTUALLY BECOME UNTENABLE.
THEY WILL PRESUMABLY FOLLOW PROBING TACTICS AND WHEN THEY MEET
FIRM RESISTANCE AT ONE POINT WILL RECOIL AND THEN PRESS
AT ANOTHER.

SOVIET WILL ALSO, IN OPINION HAMLETT, BURNS, MYSELF, USE
EAST GERMANS AS CLOAK RATHER THAN EMPLOY THEIR OWN FORCES.
INDICATION THIS FOUND LAST NIGHT'S INCIDENT WHEN PLATOON
VOPO'S SURROUNDED VEHICLES WHILE ONLY USUAL SMALL SOVIET
DETACHMENT AT CHECKPOINT.

IN OUR VIEW STOPPAGE CONVOY WAS CAREFULLY PLANNED IN ADVANCE
AND CONSTITUTED MOST SERIOUS PROBE OUR INTENTIONS IN RECENT
TIMES. REPLY OUR TELEPHONIC PROTEST MADE WITH UNUSUAL SPEED
AND UNUSUAL

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AND UNUSUAL ACTIVITY NOTED KARLSHORST FOR SO LATE IN EVENING. ALSO THIS FIRST TIME SOVIET REFUSED PERMIT TRUCKS RETURN RPT RETURN UNLESS INSPECTED. ALTHOUGH THEY MODIFIED POSITION, FACT REMAINS THAT TRUCKS DID NOT GET THROUGH TO FEDREP AND INCIDENT PROVIDED SOVIET OPPORTUNITY TO STATE CATEGORICALLY THAT THEY WOULD HEREAFTER EXERCISE THEIR "RIGHT INSPECT CONVOYS."

CONSIDER IT LIKELY NEXT MOVE WILL BE DIRECTED TO AIR OR RAIL ACCESS, PROBABLY LATTER. RE FORMER CONSIDER ESSENTIAL COMMERCIAL TRAFFIC BE CONTINUED WITHOUT INTERRUPTION. GDR INSPIRED RUMOR NOW CIRCULATING AMONG BERLINERS THAT NEXT MOVE WILL BE AIMED COMMERCIAL CARRIERS. THEIR MORALE WOULD SUFFER SEVERELY IF SERVICE IS SUSPENDED EVEN TEMPORARILY. THEREFORE SUGGEST ARRANGEMENTS BE MADE WITH OPERATORS FOR REQUISITIONING AIRCRAFT IN SUCH CONTINGENCY AND PLANES FLOWN BY AIR FORCE CREWS, OR SIMILAR MEASURES WHICH WOULD ENSURE CONTINUATION SERVICE.

REALIZE THAT TO TURN TRAINS BACK RATHER THAN ACCEPT GDR CONTROL UNDER PROTEST WOULD MEAN SELF-IMPOSED BLOCKADE. THEREFORE DO NOT SUGGEST WE SEEK TO ALTER PRESENT TRIPARTITE AGREEMENT. IT WILL HOWEVER BE DIFFICULT TO CONVINCE BERLINERS THAT WE REGARD GDR AS EXERCISING CONTROLS SOLELY AS AGENTS SOVIETS.

IN ADDITION ATTEMPTS INTERFERE ALLIED ACCESS BERLIN WE CONSIDER IT QUITE POSSIBLE SOVIET WILL TAKE MEASURES TO WEAKEN BERLIN ECONOMY. THEY WILL AS WE SEE IT, SEEK THROUGH PROPAGANDA METHODS TO INSPIRE FLIGHT OF CAPITAL AND A TRANSFER OF PLANTS FROM BERLIN TO FEDREP. ALSO THEY WILL PRESUMABLY ENDEAVOR REDUCE FLOW INDUSTRIAL RAW MATERIALS TO BERLIN. FOR EXAMPLE, TAX ON TRUCKS OR BARGES COULD BE FURTHER INCREASED, SURFACE TRAFFIC IMPEDED BY "REPAIRS" TO ROADS, CANALS, ETC. RESULTANT STAGNATION BERLIN ECONOMY AND UNEMPLOYMENT WOULD GRAVELY AFFECT MORALE HERE. IN 1948 BERLINERS POOR AND HAD RELATIVELY LITTLE TO LOSE. TODAY THEY REASONABLY PROSPEROUS.

WHILE SOVIET HAS POWER CRIPPLE BERLIN'S ECONOMY, THAT OF SOVIET ZONE ALSO

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ZONE ALSO VULNERABLE TO RETALIATION. THEREFORE SUGGEST THAT IF AND WHEN SOV ET INITIATE MEASURES ALONG ABOVE LINES, FEDREP IN TURN INTRODUCE PROMPT COUNTER-MEASURES RE EXPORTS TO GDR. REALIZE THIS TWO-EDGED SWORD AND FEDREP HAS BEEN MOST RELUCTANT EMPLOY THIS WEAPON IN PAST. NEVERTHELESS IN OUR OPINION IT TYPE OF MOVE WHICH COMMUNIST WOULD RESPECT AND OCCASION MODIFICATION THEIR TACTICS.

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